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New Statesman -

27 July 1957

in Chelsea with babies and lodgers and not enough money; high spirited and well bred and fairly funny, like the conversation of those breathless talkers who never run out of anecdotes about their own disasters.

Turning from this to *Victorian Days* is like sitting down at the knee of a very sensible old lady who also has a weakness for running on, but whose gossip is instructive as well as soothing. Lady Clodagh Anson must have been just like that before she died, moved to continuous, rather shapeless reminiscence by the contrast between the vanished 'then' and 'now'. Her book is one of those, full of ducal relations and life above stairs, which at first sight have little enough to recommend them; but it has a quality which is rare enough – absolute naturalness. She does not try to 'write', she just flows on in a kindly, tolerant voice. Unexpectedly, she casts a spell, and one sits entranced by Granny Waterford, who had a tiara made out of foxes' teeth, or the Prince of Wales, who was 'always frightfully nice'. It is a Mitford source-book, with good humour not yet sharpened to wit, or truth into malice.

MARGARET LANE

Oh, My Papa!

The Monkey Kingdom. By IVAN SANDERSON. *Hamish Hamilton.* 35*s.*

Beyond the seas, in the Eastern continent, is the mountain Hua-kuo Shan. On the side of this mountain, at the top of a pointed rock, an egg formed, which, fructified by a breath of wind, gave birth to a Monkey. This Monkey, among the rival systems involving God but devised by men, became a powerful One. It was a shrewd honour; such systems – in addition to gait, dentition, diet, and Society – mark the frontier between the primates Simioid and Hominoid; and shortly, as monkeys may be obliged to start over again the ascent to a perception of God, we should be glad that while we lasted the Chinese put one of a tribe on whom we shall be dependent in a Pantheon.

Had it been their good fortune to develop in a country where monkeys were native the British might have deified one; the baboon, say. For in spite of a taste for dogs and horses distinguishing a certain class of person among us, monkeys are our nearest and dearest. A visit to the Zoo will prove this: the monkey-house is favourite, packed with all classes receiving entertainment, instruction, and criticism, from dawn to dusk. Alas, as Mr Sanderson's book shows, even our chief monkey-house is badly stocked. *The Monkey Kingdom* lists and gives a short account of all twelve branches of the family 'primal vertebrates', saving man.

The book is supplied with maps to show the distribution of these animals; the author does not shirk from suggestions linking us directly to them; but the chief glory of his work are the photographs many of which are in colour, most of them funnier and more apposite than the work of highly paid cartoonists. For example: just after the delightful Tarsier, four inches tall, who drinks dewdrops from leaf tips, comes the Proboscis Monkey. Fitted out with a flat, spoon-shaped nose, the top of his head is covered with red hair. Meditative he is, looking exactly like an elderly Davy Crockett; and those of us who have cultivated a physiognomic flair will be certain thought played a part in the making of that expression and features.

The book is luxurious and humbling. So let's build one bomb less and spend our money instead on three from every kind of monkey still living beside us, a little more than kith but less than kind.

CHRISTOPHER LOGUE

fall out

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New Novels

The Called and the Chosen. By MONICA BALDWIN. *Hamish Hamilton.* 15*s.*

The Lady. By CONRAD RICHTER. *Gollancz.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

The Mendelman Fire. By WOLF MANKOWITZ. *Andre Deutsch.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Ten Seconds from Now. By KAY CICELLIS. *Harvill Press.* 13*s.* 6*d.*

'We were here because we believed that the prayer of the heart intensified by self-sacrifice was the great changer of the world: that it did more than economics, politics, or pacts.' Readers to whom that sentence is meaningless – to whom prayer is either infantile self-deception or, at the best, a rather primitive psychological technique for soothing oneself in times of stress – will find the atmosphere of Miss Baldwin's novel repellent, but will still be fascinated by it as they would be by a good documentary novel about hospitals or barracks. Readers who, lost in the swirl of the world, have at times been almost overwhelmed by the agonising need for outer order and inner peace, will find a deeper meaning than the documentary one. The pattern of Miss Baldwin's novel is broadly similar to that of her autobiography, *I Leapt Over The Wall.* A young Englishwoman of good family becomes first a novice and then a professed nun in an enclosed order. After some years in Europe, her convent is transferred to her ancestral home, Stokesey, which has been given to the Church, but which she has never quite managed to put out of her own heart. She cannot help resenting the way the grandeur of Stokesey is being destroyed and she undergoes a deep symbolic inner struggle about surrendering a family relic, a blood-stained flag from Naseby, which another Sister has torn up and used as a wiping rag. She does surrender it, she does accept the necessity of having the worldly beauty of Stokesey destroyed if it is to be bare and austere enough for a convent. But without losing her faith, or her reverence for the vocation of others, she realises that she has been mistaken in her own sense of vocation. God is willing that she should follow Him, living according to her natural affections, in the world. She takes steps to be released from her vows, but without any sense of resentment, or any feeling that her years in the enclosed world have been wasted.

Miss Baldwin writes with great grace and dignity, her accounts of the actual mechanics and routine of the enclosed life are fascinating, and she is able to show how (again, as in a barracks or a hospital) the little quirks of individual character are not obliterated but, in a way, intensified. There is the nun, for instance, who loves a good gossip. There is the nun who has a special devotion to the mystery of the Holy Trinity, and the other nun who feels that such a devotion is, to say the least, a little abstract and highbrow. There are, as in any community of women, among these holy women those who have the knack of rubbing other people up the wrong way and those who have the knack of easing tension. There is the alternation, in the inner rhythm of the life, of moments of stress, fatigue, almost unbearable weariness, and moments of consolation. If this is not her only subject, one feels that Miss Baldwin could become a very good novelist, indeed. I would like a sequel about Ursula restored to the world.

Mr Richter's novel is an example of a *genre* which is becoming increasingly fashionable in America, the highbrow Western. It is written with artful simplicity and with great attention to correct local colour, as if it were, indeed, a short book of memoirs about life in New Mexico fifty years or so ago. The plot is a feud between Doña Ellen, a beautiful, proud half-Spanish, half-English New Mexican and her sinister brother-in-law, Snell Beasley. In the end, Beasley is killed in a buggy-race in which Doña Ellen, sparked into action at last, deliberately crashes her buggy into his. The plot is pure melodrama. Beasley is an impossibly black villain, Doña Ellen almost too noble and proud and beautiful to be true. But the story works with an odd magic because of the simplicity, Huckleberry Finn-like, of the boy who tells it and because the cunning plainness of the writing seems to make everything distant and dignified, and to take the melodrama for granted. I was reminded a little of some of Mr David Garnett's early short novels. Mr Richter's talent is a minor one, I think, but also one to look out for.

Mr Wolf Mankowitz, who used to be the rising hope of the stern and unbending younger Leavisites, has become a splendid vulgar entertainer, a kind of English Damon Runyon. The sentiment is treacle thick, the jokes are corny, the human feeling is splashed on lavishly like ketchup on a beefburger, the whole effect, sometimes, is that of a confidence trickster who feels so sure of himself that he can let his victims into the secret of his trick; but the result, if one is not in an excessively squeamish mood, is wonderfully easy reading and somehow one feels that, whatever else has been cooked up, the basic good nature has not. Miss Cicellis is a writer of the opposite kind: I imagine that Mr Mankowitz, in his critical days, would have dismissed her as fey and precious. I think,

53rd Annual co-1958

SANDERS, CHARLES RICHARD. Lytton Strachey:-his mind and art. 381p il $6 Yale univ. press

B or 92 Strachey, Giles Lytton 57-10155

The first chapter of this book consists of a brief summary of family history and an account of the main events of Strachey's own life. The rest of the volume is given over to consideration of his works and literary career with chapters on: Critic of Elizabethan drama; On French literature; Conception of biography; Longer biographical works; Style in action; Reputation and influence.

"Mr. Sanders himself is far from guiltless of the qualities which Strachey inveighed against. In his effort to cover every aspect of Strachey's mind and art, Mr. Sanders has divided his book into fourteen sections, some of them dealing with Strachey's major works, others with periods and types of literature. These chapters seem to have been composed at different times, and to have gone to press without the rigorous final editing one expects in a university press book. Not once, but at least nine times, the same passages, ranging in length form a sentence to half a page, are quoted twice over. Strachey would doubtless be pleased at being the subject of a laudatory study; doubtless, also, he would frown at its construction." DeLancey Ferguson

N Y Herald Tribune Bk R p10 N 17 '57 700w

"This man with two voices, the squeak when joking and the rich baritone when serious, was often capricious and spiteful, but he was steadfast in friendship. His intellectual honesty evoked admiration; his physical frailty aroused the protective instinct in men and women alike. His charm was irresistible. Mr. Sanders strives to be impartial, but he admits he has succumbed, and, in so doing, he has discovered the delight that awaits all those who come to Strachey's works with an open mind." Aileen Pippett

+ N Y Times p6 D 8 '57 600w

SANDERSON, IVAN TERENCE. Monkey kingdom; an introduction to the primates. (Hanover House bk) 200p il maps $6.95 Doubleday

599 Primates 56-10772

"Deals with more than 250 living species of mammals, ranging from the little squirrels, shaped tupaias and feathertails of the Orient to man himself, and including all creatures we know as monkeys. Starting with the most ancient living forms, Sanderson introduces in succession the families of lorises, bushbabies, lemurs and tarsiers, the little marmosets and the half-monkeys of South America and Asia, and finally deals with the apes and men and their extinct ancestors." (Springf'd Republican) Bibliography, Index.

Booklist 53:496 Je 1 '57

"Comprehensive, lively and fascinating." Tom McNally

+ Chicago Sunday Tribune p8 My 12 '57 80w

Christian Science Monitor p7 Jl 11 '57 150w

Reviewed by Christopher Logue

New Statesman 54:124 Jl 27 '57 320w

Reviewed by Leo Marceau

Springf'd Republican p9C Ap 28 '57 80w

"There is no reasonably complete and recent account of the primates in one volume, certainly nothing illustrated in this superb style, and this book will therefore be warmly welcomed."

+ Times [London] Lit Sup p564 S 20 '57 320w

SANDOZ, MARI. The horsecatcher. 192p $2.75 Westminster press

56-8429

"Set in the days after the white man's coming but when herds of buffalo still roamed the western plains is the story of a young Cheyenne told with the minute details of movement, custom and emotion which characterize this author's work. Its central theme is Young Elk's struggle to be himself, a non-warrior in a warrior's tribe." (Kirkus) For ages twelve to sixteen.

Booklist 53:457 My 1 '57

"Mari Sandoz has told Young Elk's story in this superlative book for teenagers. It portrays the fine and good life of the Indians and gives the reader an intimate knowledge of the complex Indian culture." V. P. Hass

+ Chicago Sunday Tribune pt 2, p3 My 12 '57 240w

"Mari Sandoz has written a beautiful story that is bright with warmth, humor, and love of life. It will provide rich and rewarding reading not only for older teens and young adults, but also for grownups with a taste for uncomplicated goodness." G. H. Favre

+ Christian Science Monitor p11 My 9 '57 110w

"The story comes to a moving close that must leave the reader with a recognition of rightness, true courage, and sacrifice. Intimate association with Indian folkways is provided throughout as the author reveals the special reverences, customs, and ingenuities of these Indians. The story portrays, too, a humor, gentleness, and humanity among them." V. H.

+ Horn Bk 33:230 Je '57 200w

"Though simply carried out, the story thread is strengthened by its very quietude, its thoughtful examination of an Indian mind and the interweaving of Cheyenne customs with the lives of other tribes—Comanche, Ute and Kiowa."

+ Kirkus 25:184 Mr 1 '57 160w

"A worthy addition to an area that has too many weak titles. This will help refute the 'good Indian is a dead Indian' theme. Recommended for 12-16-year-olds." L. T. Bulman

+ Library J 82:1109 Ap 15 '57 70w

"This is a moving novel for any young boy over twelve mature enough to be stirred by moral as well as physical heroism. There is a fine sense of place, the wide plains, the canyons, the brushy gullies; a deep insight into the life of the Cheyennes and their firm and understanding way with their young people." M. S. Libby

+ N Y Herald Tribune Bk R p8 My 12 '57 410w

"Once the reader has gotten used to Miss Sandoz' frequently turgid prose, he will find here an extraordinarily moving story. Elk's adventures during the long, lonely, dangerous days, the swift pursuit and careful gentling of his quarry are all that any young horse fan could ask. What gives this book stature, however, is Elk's quiet courage in defying tradition and finding his own place in his tribe and in life." E. L. Buell

+ N Y Times p24 Je 2 '57 180w

Wis Lib Bul 53:459 Jl '57

SANDOZ, MAURICE YVES. Diaghilev-Nijinsky, and other vignettes; commentary by Romola Nijinsky; prefatory note by Walter Terry. 136p il $5 Kamin

848 Authors—Correspondence, reminiscences, etc. Ballet 56-14235

Biographical essays or vignettes about some personages in the fields of the arts: Serge De Diaghilev, Vaslav Nijinsky, Camille Saint-Saens, Pierre De Coulevain, F. Roger Cornaz, The Countess of Maupeou, Ronald Firbank, The Duke of Toledo, The Marquis De Biron.

Reviewed by Margaret Lloyd

Christian Science Monitor p7 My 2 '57 280w

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+ Library J 81:2616 N 1 '56 50w